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ABSTRACT

Between 1968 and 1980, segregation of black students in the United States declined significantly, especially in the South. During the seventies, black segregation was reduced in all regions of the country, except in the Northeast which became more segregated. Increasing segregation was found in large, older industrial states and cities with extremely large minority populations and no major desegregation plans. The greater progress in student segregation in the South and other states was related to thorough enforcement of Federal legislation and court orders on civil rights and desegregation. However, evidence of a small increase in segregation from 1978 to 1980, even in the South, suggested the need for government initiatives to sustain the momentum of increasing integration. The data showed no decline in Hispanic student segregation in the seventies, and suggested even greater segregation in the future. Hispanic segregation was found to be concentrated in areas, particulary in the West, with large and growing proportions of Hispanics. The analysis suggested that if the progress in racial integration that the South experienced is to be achieved in the North and West, clear policies must be formulated for large metropolitan areas where the entire city school district and some older suburbs have become predominantly minority areas. (Author/MJL)

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WORKING PAPER: DESEGREGATION OF BLACK AND HISPANIC STUDENTS FROM 1968 TO 1980

A Report to the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary of the United States House of Representatives

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for the
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BACKGROUND

In the fall of 1981, the House Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights held extensive hearings on school desegregation. During the course of the hearings, subcommittee members and staff determined that the most recent federal data needed to be examined to learn about progress and problems in school desegregation. What direction had the nation been moving during the seventies? Subcommittee Chairman Don Edwards directed a series of inquiries to the U.S. Department of Education, asking for basic data on the segregation of blacks and Hispanics and the kinds of changes that had occurred between 1968 and 1980, a period which includes all of the controversial urban desegregation orders. The Education Department provided this data in the form of printouts produced by the DBS Corporation under subcontract to Opportunity Systems Inc. in Washington. Chairman Edwards asked the Joint Center for Political Studies to examine the data and report to the subcommittee on the major implications. This report, prepared by Gary Orfield, professor of political science, public policy, and education at the University of Chicago under contract to the Joint Center, responds to that request.

The 1980 national and regional data were first computed for this report and are released here for the first time. For some measures, 1970-1980 comparisons were chosen to permit comparison with data showing changes in overall population between censuses.

THE BASIC TRENDS

Segregation of black students declined significantly in the United States between 1968 and 1980. The most substantial changes, however, were limited to the regions that had been segregated by law before 1954--the 11 states of the South and the 6 border states. Most of this change had been achieved by 1972, and, in fact, the South has recently become slightly more segregated.

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During the seventies, all regions of the country except the Northeast reduced black segregation to some degree. The Northeast, by far the nation's most segregated region, became more segregated during the decade. The 1980-1981 school year found almost half of the black students in the Northeast in 90-100 percent minority schools, while fewer than one quarter of the black students in the South were in such schools.

The 1980 data show millions of children in integrated schools, particularly in the South, where segregation had been most severe. But it also shows that 63 percent of black students around the country remain in schools that are predominantly minority and about a third (33.2 percent) are still in intensely segregated schools with 90-100 percent minority enrollment.

The data strongly suggest that the much greater progress in the southern and border states was related to a strong enforcement effort by the federal government and the federal courts, which was primarily directed at southern segregation. When President Kennedy asked Congress to enact a civil rights bill in 1963, 98 percent of black students in the South were in all-black schools and almost all whites attended all-white schools. Enforcement of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and a number of major court decisions on southern segregation cut the number of southern black students in 99-100 percent black schools to 25 percent by 1968. During the 1968-1972 period, when the statistics in Tables 1,2, and 11 show the most dramatic changes recorded during this period, the Supreme Court made two extremely important decisions, in the cases of Alexander v. Holmes and Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg. These decisions required that southern districts desegregate immediately and authorized the use of busing when it was the only way desegregation could be accomplished. These decisions had immediate impacts in hundreds of districts and sharply decreased segregation of black and white students in the South.

Neither the executive branch nor the Supreme Court has issued such clear directives for desegregation policy in the North and West, and progress in these areas has been much slower. By 1970, the South was the least segregated region for blacks, and the gap has grown since then.

The data on Hispanic segregation trends tell a very different story and raise very important research and policy questions. There was no progress on integrating Latino students in public schools in the seventies. In fact, each region of the country has become more segregated for Hispanics as their numbers have rapidly grown in American society. Although the Supreme Court ruled, in the 1973 Denver case, that Hispanics as well as blacks should be desegregated when a school board was ordered to implement a plan, very little has been done to implement this policy, and very few cases have been brought to court.

Hispanics increased rapidly, from about a twentieth of the public school students in 1970 to about a twelfth in 1980. As their numbers grew, so did their separation from whites.* During the seventies, the substantial increase of Hispanic segregation and the gradual decline of black segregation meant that by 1980, the typical Hispanic student attended a school that was more segregated than that of the typical black student (Tables 1-6). The consistent trend toward greater segregation of Hispanics and the acceleration of that trend in the late 1970s suggest that the gap could widen. In 1980, the typical Hispanic student attended a school in which 35.5 percent of the children were white; the typical black student, a school that was very slightly more integrated, 36.2 percent white (Tables 5 and 6). In 1980, 63

*The term "white," as used in this report, should be understood to mean "non-Hispanic white," since Hispanics can be of any racial background and many are all or part white. The term "Anglo" would be more appropriate but is not used here because it is little known outside the Southwest.

percent of black students and 68 percent of Hispanic students were in schools that were predominantly minority. Thirty-three percent of blacks and 29 percent of Hispanics were in intensely segregated schools, with 90-100 percent minority children.

Not only black students but whites as well were far more likely to attend substantially integrated schools in the South than in the North. To be sure, the North and West had far smaller proportions of black students to integrate (27 percent of students in the South were black; 18 percent in the border states; 14 percent in the Northeast; 12 percent in the Midwest; and 7 percent in the West). But even taking these disparities into account, the North and West seem to be doing much less to achieve integration. In the South, the percentage of white public-school students in schools that were 90-100 percent white declined from 71 percent in 1968 to 36 percent in 1980. During the same period, there was virtually no change in the Northeast and a much smaller change in the Midwest (Table 9). Southern white students are growing up in schools where minority students are a major presence, but many white children in the Northeast and Midwest are severely isolated from nonwhite children (Table 7).

BLACK SEGREGATION

The statistics on black segregation trends contain several important messages. Dramatic progress is possible. The decisive changes from 1968-1972 have been consolidated in the southern and border states. But the momentum of increasing integration may be lost unless there are new government initiatives. This is suggested by the small increase in segregation from 1978 to 1980 and the small increase in the South (Tables 1, 2, 11). Third, there

are extremely wide regional discrepancies, and the basic problems of black segregation have changed almost beyond recognition since the fifties and sixties.

The problem of segregation for blacks is basically centered in the large older industrial states and in large cities that have experienced major racial change. The Northeast is the most segregated and has become more segregated during the seventies, because black students there are concentrated in large, predominantly nonwhite school districts that have never been ordered to implement a major desegregation plan, even within the central city.

State-by-state data show that intense segregation of black students is now focused in five areas of the United States. In fourteen states and the District of Columbia, at least 30 percent of black students are in schools that have 90-100 percent minority students. The five areas are:

-- Pennsylvania-New Jersey-New York-Connecticut

-- Illinois-Missouri-Indiana-Michigan

-- Washington, D.C.-Maryland

-- Alabama-Mississippi-Louisiana-Texas

-- California

Fourteen other states did have at least 95 percent of their black students in schools with at least 40 percent white students. To be sure, most of these states had relatively few black students at all, but the list does include Kentucky and Delaware, which had severe segregation until the implementation of metropolitan desegregation in their largest cities, Louisville and Wilmington. A number of other states had very modest problems of segregation that could be resolved without major changes.

The most segregated state in the United States for black students in 1980 was Illinois. Some 68 percent of Illinois's black students were in schools

that were 90-100 percent minority. (In the District of Columbia, which is not counted as a state, the comparable percentage is 96.) Illinois is followed by New York (56 percent), Michigan (51 percent), New Jersey (50 percent), Pennsylvania (49 percent), Missouri (44 percent), and California (41 percent). All of these industrial states lead all southern states in segregation of black students. The most segregated southern states, Louisiana and Mississippi, had 37 percent of their black students in such intensely segregated schools in 1980. The typical black student in Alabama was in a school with more than twice as high a proportion of white students than his counterpart in Illinois.

Looking at the changes in the composition of the school attended by a typical black student by state during the seventies, the data show dramatic gains in a few states, little change in others, and significant backward movement in a handful. The most striking increases in the white proportion of the student body in schools attended by blacks (in states with at least 5 percent black students) were in Nebraska (a 33 percent increase), Kentucky (25 percent), Delaware (22 percent), Wisconsin (19 percent), Oklahoma (16 percent), and Ohio (15 percent). In all of these states, major court orders affected their largest cities. Two had metropolitan merger orders. The only states to show a substantial decline in the white representation in schools attended by blacks were New York (-6.2 percent) and New Jersey (-6.0 percent). There was a small decline in Connecticut.

The statistics on segregation of blacks show that the nation took a small but important step toward desegregated education in the seventies, and that the southern and border regions have made historic progress. The Northeast has moved against this stream of change, increasing its already intense segregation and operating the nation's most segregated schools.

HISPANIC SEGREGATION

Perhaps the most significant change in public school segregation in the seventies was the clear and sharp increase of segregation of Hispanics. Hispanics are a large and rapidly growing group, which already accounts for about a twelfth of U.S. students. Hispanic children are now more likely than black children to be in predominantly minority schools, though they are less likely to be in schools that are intensely segregated (90-100 percent minority). An indication of this change is the fact that in 1970, Hispanic students in the two least segregated regions of the country--the Midwest and the West--experienced the greatest increases in segregation. Hispanic students in the West and Northeast were far more likely to be in predominantly minority schools in 1980 than black students in the South.

There are a number of possible explanations for the increasing segregation. In the first place, as a group that had been a small minority in a particular area grows and the ethnic composition of the entire local population changes, children tend to be in schools with a higher proportion of minorities even if there is a good desegregation plan. Secondly, Hispanics tend to choose large metropolitan areas as a place of residence to an extraordinary degree--even more so than blacks--and these areas, particularly their central cities, are experiencing rapid increases in their proportion of minority children. The 1980 census showed that 84 percent of Hispanics lived in metropolitan areas and 41 percent lived in central cities of metropolitan areas with more than a million residents. Hispanic families were more than six times as likely as whites to reside in the central cities of the largest metropolitan areas (over three million). It is likely, as well, that

discrimination of the type that helped force blacks into ghettos early in the century plays a part in this, as do the problems of language and immigration status.

The long term implications of these trends are unclear. The fact that we have another large, rapidly growing minority that is already by some measures more segregated than blacks and the fact that the trend is toward much greater segregation suggest the need for a serious examination of an urban society where there would be essentially separate systems of schooling not only for blacks and whites but also for Latinos.

As a whole, the West is by far the most important region for Hispanics, and what happens to Hispanic students will have a far larger impact on the West than on any other region. The West has 44 percent of the nation's Latino students, although it has only 19 percent of the nation's students. Thus, almost one fifth of the students in the West's public schools are Hispanic--a far larger proportion than in any other region (Table 10). Outside the West, large Hispanic populations are found in Texas and several large metropolitan areas (New York, Miami, Chicago, etc.). As the Hispanic population continues to grow, particularly in the Southwest, this region may play the role for Hispanics that the South played for blacks. Tables 3,4, and 6 show that Hispanic students in the West now attend schools in which most children are from minority groups--sometimes schools with few non-Hispanic students. Already 63.4 percent of Latino pupils in the West are in predominantly minority schools. If Texas were added to the western region, as it should be for analysis of Hispanic segregation, the level of segregation would be significantly higher.

Hispanics are concentrated in a smaller number of states than blacks, and a good many states have very few Latino students so far and very few signs of

segregation. There are 17 states where at least 19 of every 20 Hispanic students are in schools that are 40-100 percent white.

The problems of segregation of Hispanic children are most severe in four states, which have large numbers of Latino children in schools that are 90-100 percent minority. New York State leads the list with 57 percent of its Hispanic students in this category, followed by Texas (40 percent), New Jersey (35 percent), and Illinois (32 percent). In 1980, the typical New York State Hispanic student was in a school with only 21 percent white students, the typical Texas Latino pupil in a school with 28 percent whites, the typical New Jersey child in a school with 26 percent whites, and the typical Illinois Latino student in a 36 percent white school. All of these levels of segregation worsened during the seventies. The only states to show any significant improvement were Wyoming, where an influx of whites drawn by the energy boom raised the white proportion and lowered the Hispanic proportion statewide, and Colorado, probably because of the Denver desegregation plan.

IMPLICATIONS

The school statistics show that, as the United States becomes an increasingly multiracial society, racial segregation remains the prevailing pattern in most regions with significant minority populations. Progress in desegregation for blacks in the South is offset by increasing segregation in the North. The large Hispanic population faces increasing educational segregation in the West and in states elsewhere with significant Hispanic populations. Where progress has been made, the changes appear to be related to policies and enforcement efforts by the courts and federal executive agencies. Pressure to enforce desegregation has diminished in recent years, and so has progress. There has been no serious effort to provide integration for Hispanics, and their segregation is rapidly increasing.

A further analysis, examining data from metropolitan areas, would show the degree to which the remaining problems of segregation are really problems of large metropolitan areas in the large states. If the progress achieved in the South is to be emulated in the North and West, clear policies for large metropolitan areas where the entire central-city school district and some older suburbs have become minority institutions must be resolved.

A quarter century after the beginning of significant southern desegregation with the Little Rock court order, the statistics from the South show that once unimaginable change is possible. The data from the North and West and the data for Hispanics from all parts of America show that little can be achieved without clear policies, effectively implemented.

Table 1

PERCENT OF BLACK STUDENTS IN
SCHOOLS WITH MORE THAN HALF MINORITY STUDENTS
BY REGION, 1968-1980

	U.S. TOTAL	SOUTHERN STATES	BORDER STATES	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	WEST
1968	76.6	80.9	71.6	66.8	77.3	72.2
1972	63.6	55.3	67.2	69.9	75.3	68.1
1976	62.4	54.9	60.1	72.5	70.3	67.4
1980	62.9	57.1	59.2	79.9	69.5	66.8
change 1968 to 1980	-13.7	-23.8	-12.4	+13.1	-7.8	-5.4

Table 2

PERCENT OF BLACK STUDENTS IN
SCHOOLS WITH 90-100 PERCENT MINORITY ENROLLMENTS
BY REGION, 1968-1980

	U.S. TOTAL	SOUTH	BORDER	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	WEST
1968	64.3	77.8	60.2	42.7	58.0	50.8
1972	38.7	24.7	54.7	46.9	57.4	42.7
1976	35.9	22.4	42.5	51.4	51.1	36.3
1980	33.2	23.0	37.0	48.7	43.6	33.7
change 1968-80	-31.1	-54.8	-23.2	+6.0	-14.4	-17.1

Table 3

PERCENT OF HISPANIC STUDENTS
IN SCHOOLS WITH MORE THAN HALF MINORITY STUDENTS
BY REGION, 1968-1980

	U.S.	SOUTH	BORDER	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	WEST
1968	54.8	69.6	**	74.8	31.8	42.4
1972	56.6	69.9	**	74.4	34.4	44.7
1976	60.8	70.9	**	74.9	39.3	52.7
1980	68.1	76.0	**	76.3	46.6	63.5
change 1968-1980	+13.3	+6.4	**	+ 1.5	+14.8	+21.1

Table 4

PERCENT OF HISPANIC STUDENTS
IN SCHOOLS WITH 90-100 PERCENT MINORITY STUDENTS
BY REGION, 1968-1980

	U.S.	SOUTH	BORDER	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	WEST
1968	23.1	33.7	**	44.0	6.8	11.7
1972	23.3	31.4	**	44.1	9.5	11.5
1976	24.8	32.2	**	45.8	14.1	13.3
1980	28.8	37.3	**	45.8	19.6	18.5
change 1968-1980	+5.7	+3.6	**	+1.8	+12.8	+6.8

**Border state figures are not reported because the very small number of Hispanics in this region makes comparison misleading. Among the Hispanics who do reside in this region 2.8% were in 90-100% minority schools in 1980 and 23.2% attend predominantly minority schools.

Table 5

PERCENT WHITE IN
RACIAL COMPOSITION OF
SCHOOL ATTENDED BY TYPICAL BLACK STUDENT,
BY REGION, 1970-1980

	U.S.	SOUTH	BORDER	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	WEST
1970	32.0	36.7	27.4	31.5	23.6	30.1
1980	36.2	41.2	37.7	27.8	30.6	34.3
CHANGE 1970-1980	+4.2	+4.5	+10.3	-3.7	+7.0	+4.2

Table 6

PERCENT WHITE STUDENTS
IN SCHOOL ATTENDED BY TYPICAL HISPANIC STUDENT
BY REGION, 1970-1980

	U.S.	SOUTH	BORDER*	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	WEST
1970	43.6	33.4	80.2	27.5	63.6	53.2
1980	35.5	29.5	66.4	27.0	51.9	39.8
CHANGE	-8.3	-3.9	-13.8*	-.5	-11.7	-13.4

(*very few Hispanics live in this region)

Table 7

PERCENT BLACK STUDENTS
IN SCHOOL ATTENDED BY TYPICAL WHITE STUDENT
BY REGION, 1970-1980

	U.S.	SOUTH	BORDER	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	WEST
1970	6.1	14.9	5.8	4.5	2.8	2.4
1980	8.0	17.5	8.3	4.8	4.5	3.4

Table 8

PERCENT HISPANIC STUDENTS
IN SCHOOL ATTENDED BY TYPICAL WHITE STUDENT
BY REGION, 1970-1980

	U.S.	SOUTH	BORDER	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	WEST
1970	2.8	2.8	.3	1.4	1.0	8.9
1980	3.9	4.1	.6	2.3	1.4	11.1

Table 9

PERCENT OF WHITE STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS
90-100 PERCENT WHITE, BY REGION,
1968-1980

	U.S.	SOUTH	BORDER	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	WEST
1968	78.4	70.6	80.0	83.0	89.4	63.0
1972	68.9	38.0	75.9	82.9	87.5	56.0
1976	64.9	34.6	64.8	81.4	84.7	49.9
1980	61.2	35.0	64.1	80.2	81.2	43.3
change 1968-1980	-17.2	-35.6	-15.9	-2.8	-8.2	-19.7

Table 10

RACIAL COMPOSITION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL
ENROLLMENT, NATION AND REGIONS, 1970-1980
DEPT. of EDUCATION SURVEY DATA

	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White
1970					
Nation	.4%	.5%	5.1%	15.0%	79.1%
Northeast	.1%	.4%	4.4%	11.9%	83.3%
Border	.8%	.2%	.3%	17.3%	81.4%
South	.2%	.1%	5.5%	27.2%	66.9%
Midwest	.3%	.2%	1.4%	10.4%	87.6%
West	1.1%	1.6%	13.0%	6.3%	77.9%
1980					
Nation	.8%	1.9%	8.0%	16.1%	73.2%
Northeast	.2%	1.4%	6.6%	13.6%	78.3%
Border	1.5%	.8%	.7%	17.5%	79.5%
South	.3%	.7%	8.8%	26.9%	63.3%
Midwest	.6%	.9%	2.3%	12.4%	83.7%
West	1.8%	4.4%	19.0%	6.8%	68.0%

Table 11

BLACK AND HISPANIC ENROLLMENT IN PREDOMINANTLY MINORITY AND 90-100% MINORITY SCHOOLS, 1968-1980

year	predominantly minority		90-100% minority	
	BLACKS	HISPANICS	BLACKS	HISPANICS
1968	76.6%	54.8%	64.3%	23.1%
1970	66.9%	55.8%	44.3%	23.0%
1972	63.6	56.6%	38.7%	23.3%
1974	63.0%	57.9%	37.8%	23.9%
1976	62.4%	60.8%	35.9%	24.8%
1978	61.8%	63.1%	34.2%	25.9%
1980	62.9%	68.1%	33.2%	28.8%

TECHNICAL NOTES

The basic computer work for this report was done by DBS Corporation under subcontract to Opportunity Systems Inc. which prepared data then submitted for analysis by the Joint Center for Political Studies.

The regions used for analysis in this report include the following states:

SOUTH: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia
BORDER: Deleware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, West Virginia
NORTHEAST: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont
MIDWEST: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin
WEST: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

EXCLUDED: Hawaii and Alaska, because of unique ethnic composition and distance from other states assigned to regions

Exposure Indices-- the tables reporting the racial average composition of schools attended by blacks, Hispanics, and whites are determined by calculations using the following alegebraic formula, producing a figure commonly called an exposure index:

Exposure Index Showing Typical Exposure of White Students to Blacks in a School District

$$E_{W/B} = \left(\sum_i \frac{W_i}{W_D}\right) X \left(\frac{b_i}{W_i + b_i}\right) \quad X \quad 100$$

W_i is the number of white students in the ith school

W_D is the number of white pupils in the district

b_i is the number of black pupils in the district